

Message Text

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42

ACTION INR-05

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 ARA-06 PM-03 NSC-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 RSC-01 NSCE-00 /035 W

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R 051240Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8705

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 8091

LIMDIS (NOFORN)

PASS DEFENSE ISA AND DIA

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1, 2, 3 DATE IMPOSSIBLE TO DETERMINE

TAGS: PARM, PINR, TECH, AR, XM, XH

SUBJ: ARGENTINE NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: STATE 235719

1. WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE INFORMATION SUPPLIED
IN REFTEL:

(A) POWER REACTORS. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT 6 OR 7 POWER
REACTORS COULD HAVE BEEN BEGUN IN ARGENTINA BY END OF 1977,
BUT BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. ATUCHA I IS OPERATING; EMBALSE
IS CONTRACTED FOR (ALBEIT WITH SOME UNCERTAINTY DUE TO
APPARENT SAFEGUARDS IMPASSE) AND ATUCHA II BEING DISCUSSED.
IF ONE ADDITIONAL PROJECT WERE INITIATED PER YEAR, THERE
WOULD INDEED BE SIX UNDERWAY BY 1977.

(B) FISSIONABLE MATERIAL FROM EASTERN EUROPE. WE SHARE
DEPARTMENTS SKEPTICISM ABOUT THIS POSSIBILITY AND HAVE
NOTHING TO CORROBORATE IT IN THE LEAST. COULD SOVIETS
BE A POSSIBLE ALTERNATE SUPPLIER FOR RESEARCH REACTOR FUEL?

(C) WE HAVE NOT HEARD A SITE MENTIONED AS YET FOR
A CHEM. PROCESSING PLANT, NOR HAVE WE HEARD THAT A POWER
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REACTOR WOULD BE BUILT AT SAN NICOLAS. PRESENT CHEM.

PROCESSING EFFORTS APPEAR CENTERED AT EZEIZA. CNEA FREELY ADMITS IT PLANS TO MOVE IN CHEM. PROCESSING IF IT CAN, HOWEVER, BUT THIS INTENTION FAR EXCEED ANY CONCRETE PLANNING (PARTICULARLY FINANCIAL PLANNING) SO FAR AS WE KNOW.

(D) RE VISIT OF SOVIETS TO ARGENTINA. WE HAVE NO FURTHER INFO ON THIS. (SEE ALSO DEPT A-6769 AND BA 6770).

2. RE SOURCES SUGGESTIONS TO DERAIL ARGENTINE NUCLEAR PROGRAM, THE FIRST (HIGH SALARIES TO ATTRACT KEY FIGURES TO BRAZIL) NOT SOMETHING WE BELIEVE US SHOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN. AS MATTER OF FACT, THERE ALREADY A CONSIDERABLE BRAIN DRAIN OF ARGENTINE SCIENTISTS TO BRAZIL, US AND ELSEWHERE, DUE SALARY AND OTHER FACTS. FURTHER, CNEA IS NOT AS IT APPEARS TO US, A VERY WELL ORGANIZED AND FUNCTIONING AGENCY AT PRESENT. BEST SCIENTIFIC LEADERS ARE NOT RUNNING PROGRAMS, LARGELY DUE TO INTERNAL ARGENTINE POLITICS. ON SECOND POINT, WE NOT SURE THAT R&D PROGRAM ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONRY WOULD NECESSARILY DERAIL INTEREST IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT IT MIGHT HELP IN SOME SMALL WAY. AS DEPT AWARE, EMBASSY HAS URGED FURTHER EFFORTS TO COOPERATE WITH ARGENTINA IN DEFENSE R&D, AND WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THIS WOULD HAVE POSITIVE RESULTS AND URGE DEPT AND DOD TO MOVE PENDING AGREEMENT ALONG TO POINT WHERE WE CAN ENTER FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOA.
HILL

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CONSTRUCTION, NUCLEAR REACTORS, PROGRAMS (PROJECTS), FISSIONABLE MATERIALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BUENOS08091
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740317-0674
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741171/aaaacilq.tel
Line Count: 87
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION INR
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: STATE 235719
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 MAY 2002 by garlanwa>; APPROVED <26 MAR 2003 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ARGENTINE NUCLEAR PROGRAM
TAGS: PARM, PINR, TECH, AR, XM, XH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005